

Today's News - Friday, February 12, 2010

- We love good news (to us, anyway): NYC to make pedestrian mall experiment on Broadway permanent (though a few bah-humbugs remain).
- Is it OK to run architectural competitions for Haiti? Browning says yes: "it's an architect's duty to respond to humanitarian disasters; Sinclair says no: "response to human suffering is a mandate, not a career advancement."
- A "battle royal" brewing over planned tower next to San Francisco's iconic Transamerica Pyramid: is it "a creative approach to sustainable development," or "an audacious move" that sets "a dangerous precedent"?
- Saffron minces no words about Philly's new Family Court: the "design threatens to be a mean and unwelcoming presence" with "public spaces as clinical as a morgue" (even city boosters are "having trouble mustering nice words" about it).
- The Vancouver Olympics begin: stop griping about the Canada Pavilion: it's "sensible, modest and ... Canadian" - "nobody seems to have heard of it until it turned out not to have been designed by Frank Gehry."
- The Winter Olympics may not be the "design extravaganza that London 2012 will be" - but there's mucho millions of dollars in design on display (and who knew the medals are made of reclaimed from discarded computer motherboards?!?).
- Mincing no words about the "short-sighted budget slashes" being made to National Trust for Historic Preservation programs (we concur).
- Meanwhile, the Trust for Public Land launches "Save the Peak" campaign to protect land around the Hollywood sign from development.
- Walker cheers the effort, but finds the Hollywood sign campaign off-message: "a preservationist and typographic disaster."
- Maki's first building in Canada is "a deceptively complex cultural building of a quality rarely seen in this country."
- Q&A with Ban: Why do you take on so many humanitarian projects? "Sometimes working for the privileged makes me tired because they are very demanding."
- An eyeful of the Cleveland Design Competition: Lakefront Station winners (all from Europe).
- I.M. Pei got his RIBA Gold Medal yesterday (yay!); not so cheery: 1979 review of his National Gallery of Art: his "new wing is a clumsy giant" (that's one of the nicer things said).
- Weekend diversions (and lots of 'em):
- Beginning today, "design freaks" from around the world are descending on Palm Springs for Modernism Week.
- In Auburn, AL, "After You Left, They Took It Apart" details the downfall of three modern houses by Paul Rudolph.
- "Contemplating the Void" at the Guggenheim "may sound like a grim invitation to stare mortality in the face," but a lot of the big-name contributors "approached the exercise with nothing short of glee" (great pix!).
- "Mind Your Behaviour - Close Up: 3XN" at the Danish Architecture Centre explores how architecture can shape - you guessed it - our behavior.
- Oubrierie, Corbu's last living protégé, takes the spotlight in NYC.
- Pardo on view in Dublin: "the best examples of his cross-over into architecture are when he makes or remakes buildings."
- All things green in the Pioneer Valley on view at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Page turners: Glancey on Muschamp's "Hearts of the City": "boy-oh-boy, are there some rattling good rows in this book...opinionated, occasionally self-indulgent yet warm, brave, and fully alive."
- Goldberger's "Why Architecture Matters" is "by parts a useful, inspiring, frustrating guide" to the "debate about the emotions buildings provoke in us."
- "New Topographics" spotlights William Jenkins's 1975 exhibition: "an austere beautiful book" still "troubling in its matter-of-factness."
- "Unbuilt Masterworks of the 21st Century" offers "bumptious confidence" bouncing off every page: "Building them would ruin them."

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[New York Traffic Experiment Gets Permanent Run: Despite missing traffic targets, the mayor declared the project, which closed parts of Broadway to cars, a success...emphasizing the improvements to pedestrian safety...along with the aesthetic enhancement to an area once associated with exhaust and gridlock..."there was much more gained than there was lost."](#) -- Janette Sadik-Khan - New York Times

[Is it OK to run architectural competitions for Haiti? Gavin Browning/Studio X argues it's an architect's duty to respond to humanitarian disasters, while Cameron Sinclair/Architecture for Humanity urges the industry to follow through with its designs — ideas are not enough - BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

['Battle royal' brewing over planned S.F. tower: ...proposed 38-story condominium tower...next to San Francisco's iconic Transamerica Pyramid...Proponents say it is a creative approach to sustainable development...Critics say developers are seeking a laundry list of exemptions...in an audacious move that runs counter to decades of planning and would set a dangerous precedent. -- Heller Manus Architects \[images\] - San Francisco Chronicle](#)

[Courting mediocrity with bland designing: ...even Philadelphia's most gregarious boosters are having trouble mustering nice words for the new Family Court building...defending it as the best that can be built for the \\$200 million budgeted...design threatens to be a mean and unwelcoming presence...public spaces as clinical as a morgue...lobby is a cattle chute... By Inga Saffron -- EwingCole \[images\] - Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

[Sensible, modest and ... Canadian: Oh, dear. Did you hear about the Canada Pavilion at the Vancouver Olympics? "It looks like a temporary tent"...Bingo. It is a temporary tent - and it cost \\$10-million. Should we have spent more?...this is a very odd moment for anyone to complain about Canada's modest nature...Nobody seems to have heard of it until it turned out not to have been designed by Frank Gehry. - National Post \(Canada\)](#)

[Designing the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics: ...they won't be quite the design extravaganza that London 2012 will be - but there's still going to be hundreds of millions of dollars in design on display... -- Cannon Design; LMN Architects; Omer Arbel; Meomi Design \[slide show\] - Fast Company](#)

[Short-Sighted Budget Slashes Preservation Funding: Save America's Treasures, the nation's only bricks-and-mortar grant program, is proposed for elimination...Preserve America, a sister program...for preservation education and outreach \(funded out of the National Recreation Account\), would be eliminated. - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[Hiding a Hollywood Symbol, to Make It More Visible: A preservation group hopes that Angelenos can be enticed to donate to an effort to keep development from encroaching on a famed sign...a banner that will read "Save the Peak"... -- Trust for Public Land - New York Times](#)

[Hooray for Sallywood? Why The Hollywood Sign is Off-Message: ...altered in a campaign to prevent a nearby peak from becoming a real estate development. The result was a preservationist and typographic disaster...a local artist or designer...could have wowed us with some temporary signage installation that was beautiful and readable from more than a few miles away. By Alissa Walker \[images, links\] - Fast Company](#)

[Crystal Clear: Fumihiko Maki's first building in Canada is a deceptively complex cultural building of a quality rarely seen in this country...Delegation of the Ismaili Imam, Ottawa...to reflect the Aga Khan's conviction that "buildings can do more than simply house people and programs..." -- Moriama & Teshima Architects \[images\] - Canadian Architect](#)

[Q&A with Shigeru Ban: about his work, his interests and what he believes will define meaningful architecture in the future...There are "too many big projects everywhere. The quality of projects is getting lower and lower..."...Why do you take](#)

on so many humanitarian projects? "Sometimes working for the privileged makes me tired because they are very demanding." - Wall Street Journal

Cleveland Design Competition: Project 2009: Lakefront Station - Winning Submissions -- Mario Caceres & Christian Canonico (France); Pepijn van Voorst (Netherlands); Russell Collin (UK) [images] - Cleveland Design Competition

From the AR archives: In celebration of I.M. Pei being awarded the RIBA Gold Medal...revisits the National Gallery of Art, Washington in "IM Pei, Inside the NGA," a 1979 article by Colin Amery..."Pei's new wing is a clumsy giant..." [images] - Architectural Review (UK)

People Who Live in Glass Houses: From Feb. 12 to 21...thousands of building and design freaks...will descend upon Palm Springs for Modernism Week...celebration of mid-20th century design runs the gamut from the kitsch...to the academic...to the starstruck... -- Albert Frey; Donald Wexler; William F. Cody; E. Stewart Williams [links] - Time Magazine

Homes left abandoned, leaving modern ruins: "After You Left, They Took It Apart: Demolished Paul Rudolph Homes"...photographs by Chris Mottalini detailing the downfall of three modern houses in Rhode Island, Florida and Connecticut...at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, Auburn, AL - The Auburn Plainsman (Alabama)

"Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum": While the show's title may sound like a grim invitation to stare mortality in the face, many of the contributors approached the exercise with nothing short of glee. -- Zaha Hadid; MVRDV; Greg Lynn; Olson Kundig Architects [images] - New York Times

"Mind Your Behaviour - Close Up: 3XN": Architecture can get people talking together...calm children in the classroom...make passive people more active...shape corporate culture...In short, architecture can shape your behaviour; at the the Danish Architecture Centre, February 13 - May 13 - Danish Architecture Centre (Copenhagen, Denmark)

Jose Oubriere Exhibit at Spitzer School of Architecture: will feature Oubriere's best-known works, the Church of St. Pierre in Firminy, France, and the Miller House in Lexington, Ky...the last living protégé of Le Corbusier - City College of New York (CCNY)

Cuban-American Artist Jorge Pardo to Exhibit at the Irish Museum of Modern, Dublin: ...ranging from sculpture and installations to design and architecture...Perhaps the best examples of his cross-over into architecture are when he makes or remakes buildings. - ArtDaily.org

How 'green' is their valley? "Greening the Valley: Sustainable Architecture in the Pioneer Valley" at the University of Massachusetts Amherst...showcases sustainable structures...designed by locally and nationally recognized architects. - Boston Globe

Muschamp, the Works: "Hearts of the City: The Selected Writings of Herbert Muschamp": ...boy-oh-boy, are there some rattling good rows in this book...as big, as heavy, and often, hard-hitting as a brick...a roller-coaster guide...taken with an opinionated, occasionally self-indulgent yet warm, brave, and fully alive companion. By Jonathan Glancey - The Architect's Newspaper

"Why Architecture Matters" by Paul Goldberger: Yes, but is it art? ...the dean of American architecture critics, explains what it takes to turn a big building into something even bigger...by parts a useful, inspiring, frustrating guide to the long history and complex content of the debate about the emotions buildings provoke in us. - Globe and Mail (Canada)

"New Topographics" by Britt Salvesen: photographs that find beauty in the banal: With its stark yet oddly romantic images of American factories, intersections and trailer parks, William Jenkins's 1975 exhibition rewrote the rules of landscape photography. Does it have the same impact today? ...now collected in an austere beautiful book...still looks, for the most part, contemporary -- and still seems troubling in its matter-of-factness... - Guardian (UK)

"Unbuilt Masterworks of the 21st Century: Inspirational Architecture for the Digital Age" by Will Jones: ...a compendium of schemes that never made it...But is this menagerie of failures miserable? Hell no. Bumptious confidence bounces off every page...Building them would ruin them. - Icon (UK)

Twilight Visions: Vintage Surrealist Photography Sheds New Light on Architecture: An exhibition and book of photographs of Paris between the wars might just be the necessary correctives to the virtual sterility of digital imagery. By Norman Weinstein - ArchNewsNow



Morphosis: Cahill Center, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California

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